

Public Health Act, 1872.

REPORT

FOR THE YEAR 1906,

BEING THE

Thirty-Second Annual Report

ON THE

SANITARY CONDITION

OF THE

Trowbridge Urban Sanitary District.

PRESENTED TO THE

TROWBRIDGE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

BY

JAMES PEARSE, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health to the Trowbridge Urban Sanitary Authority.

TROWBRIDGE :

B. LANSDOWN & SONS, SILVER STREET.



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Medical Officer's Annual Report.

To the Chairman and Members of the Trowbridge Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,—

I have the honour to submit to you my fifth Report as your Medical Officer of Health.

The estimated population of the district to the middle of 1906 is 11,266, compared with a population of 11,526 at the census of 1901. But the estimated figure is probably low, as I do not think the diminution of population which took place in the decennium previous to the last census has been maintained. The number of new houses erected during the year was 19.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The births during the year numbered 231, as against 246 in 1905. The annual rate per 1,000 of the population stands at 20·5, which approximates closely to the average of the previous ten years, 20·7. The rate for England and Wales for the year was 27.

The deaths during the year numbered 167, giving an annual rate of 14·8. The corresponding figures for 1905 were 152 and 13·4. It has not been the custom in previous years to correct the crude death rate of the district, but I have now deemed it advisable to do so. Patients are admitted into the Joint Isolation Hospital from outside the district; in the event of the death of any such the zymotic death rate would be seriously altered; these deaths have therefore been deducted. But to make a correct return it is necessary to add the deaths occurring in the Workhouse of residents from the district; and returns have also been forwarded to me of deaths occurring in the Royal United Hospital, Bath. Three deaths of non-residents in the Isolation Hospital have accordingly been deducted, and an addition made of 12 deaths in the Workhouse and 4 in Bath Hospital. These alterations bring

the total number of deaths to 180, and give a corrected death rate of 15·9. That for England and Wales during the year was 15·4.

The mortality figures for each term of years stands as follows :

Under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and upwards.
24	10	4	6	50	86

It is interesting to note that of the total deaths, 20 were of individuals over 80 years of age. The conditions of the district are evidently conducive to longevity, and "senile decay" is amongst the most frequently recurring of the causes of deaths, such being registered in 22 instances.

Three deaths were unregistered. In these cases no medical man had been in attendance, and no inquest was deemed necessary ; the return is made by the registrar from such information as he may be able to glean. These cases are entered in one instance as "probably premature birth" and in two instances as "probably heart disease."

A table appended to this Report gives the causes of deaths occurring in the district. It is satisfactory to note that there were only seven deaths from phthisis, the same figure as in 1905, and it is reassuring to be able to look forward with certainty to a further diminution of this dread disease as sanitary science progresses. Diseases of the respiratory organs, apart from phthisis, account for 29 deaths ; 10 of these occurred during the month of April, when there was a spell of severe weather. The figure of 22 deaths from malignant disease, is, I regret to say, considerably higher than has previously been noted.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

The number of deaths of infants under one year of age was 24, giving a rate per 1,000 births of 103·7, compared with an average of the previous ten years of 25·9 and 96·7. Ten of these deaths were of children under one month old, most of them probably infants weakly from birth. Of the remainder six were due to diarrhoeal diseases, probably due to errors in feeding ; but the figures are too small on which to base any deductions.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The following table shews the number of cases notified during the year with the corresponding figures for 1905 and the average for the previous 10 years :—

	1906.	1905.	1896-1905.
Diphtheria ...	37	17	9·8
Membranous Croup	—	—	·5
Erysipelas ...	7	7	11·1
Scarlet Fever ...	40	92	40·3
Enteric Fever ...	—	1	3·7
Puerperal Fever ...	2	—	·8

It will be noted that there has been a marked increase in the prevalence of diphtheria. Formerly this disease was rarely notified, as will be seen by the fact that the average yearly number of cases for the ten years ending 1900 was only 2·9. The increase is partly due to the increased facility of diagnosis by bacteriological methods, but there has also been a real increase, part of a general movement throughout the country.

There has been no serious sudden epidemic of the disease, but this has been endemic throughout the year, as is shewn by the number of notifications received during the several months: February 8, March 2, April 3, May 3, June 3, July 1, August 2, September 1, October 8, November 2, December 4. The larger number of cases have occurred in the Newtown district, but others have occurred irregularly throughout the whole area. In October several cases occurred in connection with one of the Infant schools. I kept this school under observation, visiting also where it seemed advisable any children who were absent through ill-defined illness: but the outbreak subsided and I did not deem it necessary to advise closure. Multiple cases occurred in five households, 28 separate houses being affected. Enquiries were in every instance made as to the milk supply, but no common source of supply to infected houses was found. It will be seen, therefore, that it has not been possible to discover any single originating cause for the outbreak. I have no doubt that the main influence has been direct infection from a previous case. Many cases of

Diphtheria are very mild and may readily be looked upon as nothing more than a slight "sore throat." A child thus affected may readily infect its companions in school or elsewhere, and the secondary infection may be much more serious than the first. Also there may persist after Diphtheria a protracted nasal discharge which is highly infectious, but may readily be considered of no import. No doubt association of children in school is the main channel of infection. The question of medical inspection in schools has not yet assumed practical form: but at present it would be well if children who shew any suggestive symptoms such as enlarged glands in the neck, or discharge from the nose with excoriation of the lip, should be excluded from school pending a medical opinion.

The deaths from Diphtheria numbered four.

The number of cases of Scarlet Fever occurring during the year was 40, a considerable reduction on the prevalence in 1905 when 92 notifications were received. The cases occurred principally in the earlier months of the year, and were the last effects of the epidemic of 1905. The distribution throughout the year was as follows:—January, 8; February, 6; March, 3; April, 4; May, 5; June, 0; July, 1; August, 4; September, 1; October, 5; November, 3; December, 0. The Newtown district was again that principally affected, but the cases have not been confined to this area. Thirty-two separate houses were affected. The outbreak has been only of a mild form of the disease, no deaths having occurred.

There has been no severe outbreak of Measles.

Whooping Cough was somewhat prevalent in the earlier part of the year, and is responsible for one death.

Chicken Pox is a mild disease, and among the working classes medical advice is rarely sought. But it may be noted that on visiting one school I found three children present with the eruption on them.

Puerperal Fever re-appears in the mortality list after a fortunate absence of some years. Two cases were notified, both of which proved fatal.

There has been no prevalence of Enteric Fever.

Neither has there been any occurrence of Small Pox, a fortunate circumstance in view of the neglect of vaccination in the District.

Influenza may be considered as finding its place amongst the infectious diseases. The district was visited by a severe epidemic in the end of the year, more widespread and intense than has been the case for some time past. The cases were mainly of the gastric type. Two deaths are registered as due to this disease, but its influence is seen less in the mortality it may directly induce than in the after effects of ill health, of varying type, from which so many of its victims suffer.

During the year 25 cases of Diphtheria and 24 of Scarlet Fever were removed to the Joint Isolation Hospital. In view of the spread of Diphtheria it is a matter for congratulation that the Hospital has been opened, so that it is now possible to isolate patients suffering from this disease. The benefit is not confined to the fact of Isolation. Diphtheria is essentially a malady requiring most careful nursing and supervision, and I have little doubt the mortality would have been higher but for the attention which has been given in this Hospital.

WATER SUPPLY.

There has been no shortage of water throughout the year, and the quality has been well maintained. The supply has been laid on to 20 additional houses.

SLAUGHTERHOUSES

Are on the whole kept in a satisfactory condition, but the owners of some require frequent supervision to ensure this. Alterations have been recommended at Messrs. Bowyer and Company's slaughter-houses, and considerable improvement has been effected.

COMMON LODGING HOUSE.

Some improvements have been made in connection with the Sanitary arrangements, and in the provision of more adequate washing accommodation. On my visits I have always found the conditions clean.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES ACT.

177 house to house inspections have been made, and a considerable number of nuisances thus brought to notice have been rectified. Two houses have been closed during the year as unfit for occupation.

Three cases of overcrowding have been dealt with.

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS, and MILKSHOPS.

I have from time to time visited the various Cowsheds throughout the District, and frequent visits have been paid by the Inspector. In the course of 1905 marked improvements were effected in the drainage and paving arrangements of many of the sheds and yards; further improvements have been carried out during 1906, and the condition of the sheds in this respect is much more satisfactory than formerly. There is also some improvement as regards the general cleanliness: there are instances in which this is very satisfactory, while in others there is still very ample room for improvement. This is a point I would emphasize for there is no work in the sanitary department to which I attach more importance than that of endeavouring to obtain a pure milk supply.

The powers which the large towns are seeking as regards the inspection of the milk which is sent to their area, will materially affect sellers in the country if adopted, and the findings of the Royal Commission on the danger of using milk from tuberculous cows will have a further important influence.

There are 37 persons engaged in the milk trade on the Register. Twenty-two notices have been served for defective lime-washing.

UN SOUND FOOD.

There has been no serious seizure of unsound food during the year. The most important point in this connection is the question of Tuberculosis among Swine, and a systematic examination is now carried out by those engaged in the bacon industry to prevent the entrance of meat thus affected to the market. The findings of the

Royal Commission as to the relation of human and porcine Tuberculosis will be a matter of considerable moment to the District.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACT.

The total number of workshops etc. on the Register is 118. One hundred and fifty-nine visits have been paid to these by the Sanitary Inspector, and most of them have also been inspected by myself. Their condition is on the whole satisfactory, and the necessary regulations are observed. One case of overcrowding was abated. There was brought to your notice one extremely unsatisfactory workshop, where girls were employed in rag sorting in an ill ventilated room over a stable: this has since been closed.

Sundry nuisances under the Act have been dealt with as follows:—Nuisance from gas plant, 1; want of cleanliness, 24; defective or insufficient w.c.'s, 8; overcrowding, 1; manure removal, 4.

Nine lists of outworkers have been received during the year, representing 151 workers, distributed as follows:—Wearing apparel, 1; Glove-making, 134; Rag-stripping, 6.

Thirty-three premises of outworkers have been inspected.

NUISANCE FROM GAS PLANT.

There was noted in my last Annual Report a serious nuisance arising from the installation of a Gas Producing Plant. The use of this motive power has been extended to other Factories in the district during 1906, but no nuisance has been reported after the early stages of installation.

MORTUARY.

During the year a Mortuary has been erected in Gas Works Road. The want of such a building has been frequently experienced in previous years.

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.

I am indebted to your Surveyor for the following Report as to the new work done under this heading.

NORTHERN SEWERAGE SCHEME.

“The whole of this work has now been completed and connected up to the Sewage Disposal Works.

MAIN INTERCEPTING SEWER.

This sewer has also been completed and connected up to the Outfall Works.

TROWBRIDGE SEWAGE DISPOSAL WORKS.

These works were completed and have been in working order since 9th September, 1906, but owing to difficulties having arisen with the working of the Pumping Plant the sewage has only been able to be partially treated. As the matter is at present receiving the urgent attention of the Council this state of affairs will shortly be remedied."

During the progress of house to house inspections serious defects of drainage were discovered affecting houses in the Down, Adcroft Street, and Harford Street. These defects have been satisfactorily remedied.

RAINFALL.

I am indebted to Dr. Tayler for observations of rainfall taken at Lovemead during 1906, and give for comparison the corresponding figures in 1905 :—

		1906.		1905.
January	...	4·15	...	·2
February	...	2·29	...	·64
March	...	1·58	...	3·81
April	...	1·16	...	1·98
May	...	1·56	...	·4
June	...	2·59	...	2·76
July	...	·8	...	1·34
August	...	1·53	...	4·68
September	...	·89	...	1·27
October	...	5·93	...	1·15
November	...	2·96	...	2·93
December	...	1·9	...	·93
		-----		-----
		27·34	Inches	22·09

During the year there has been a considerable alteration in the Sanitary Department as your Council has declined to continue the appointment of a whole-time Sanitary Inspector. This matter has been under the consideration of one of H.M. Inspectors to the Local Government Board, who spent a considerable time investigating the requirements of the District; the Report embodying his conclusions has not yet been received. I would like to testify to the ability and thoroughness with which his duties were discharged by Mr. Strickland, whose departure I regretted. I will endeavour to do my best in order that the sanitary work shall not suffer under altered the circumstances, and I have always found Mr. Allen willing and anxious to discharge the obligations of his office. There is always a considerable amount of work requiring attention, specially as regards the poorer districts of the area and to these I am specially desirous to give supervision during the ensuing year.

I have the honour to remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

JAMES PEARSE, M.D.,

Trowbridge,

Medical Officer of Health.

February, 1907.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S OFFICE,
MARKET HOUSE CHAMBERS,
TROWBRIDGE.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE
TROWBRIDGE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit to you a Summary of the work done in my Department during the twelve months ending 31st December, 1906.

Summary of Work Done.

INSPECTIONS :—

HOUSES :				No.
(a)	House to House Inspections	...	177	} 456
(b)	Houses Inspected due to Infectious Disease	...	65	
(c)	Other Houses Inspected	...	214	
	Slaughter Houses	...	...	89
	Lodging-house	...	...	17
	Cowsheds, Dairies, and Milkshops	...	...	90
	Workshops and Factories	...	...	113
	Stables	...	...	32
	Pigstyes	...	...	15
	Poultry Pens	...	...	3
	Fried Fish Shop	...	...	4
	Petroleum Stores	...	...	30
	Miscellaneous	...	...	77
				<hr/>
				Total 926
				<hr/>

VISITS :—

	<i>Re</i> -Abatement of Nuisances	...	...	314
	Other Visits	...	...	97
				<hr/>
				Total 411
				<hr/>
	Zymotic enquiries into cases of Infectious Diseases	...	...	67
	Rooms Disinfected after Infectious Disease	...	...	50
	Patients Removed to Hospital	...	...	47
	Bedding Disinfected (lots)	...	...	52
	Total Number of Nuisances and Contraventions of the Public Health Acts, Byelaws, Cowsheds and Dairies Orders and Regulations, etc., recorded	...	...	404

Number of Samples of Water taken for Analysis	1
Number of Wells Cleansed and Repaired ...	1
Number of lots of Food-stuffs destroyed with consent of Owners	3

NUMBER ON THE VARIOUS REGISTERS :—

1. Slaughterhouses	12
2. Lodginghouses	1
3. Workshops	118
4. Cowsheds and Dairies and Milkshops :—	
Cowkeepers	17
Cowkeepers and Purveyors of Milk ...	3
Cowkeepers, Dairymen, and Purveyors of Milk	1
Dairymen and Purveyors of Milk ...	3
Purveyors of Milk	13
5. Petroleum... ..	8
6. Calcium Carbide	3

Nuisances *re* House Inspections :—

Defective drains	67
Choked drains	4
Defective drain traps	89
Defective w.c.'s	72
Insufficient flushing to w.c.'s	8
Accumulation of offensive matter	8
Insufficient ventilation of w.c.'s	2
Defective flushing cistern to w.c.'s	2
Insufficient flushing to urinal	1
Insufficient water supply	5
Overcrowding	3
Dilapidations	8
Insanitary cesspools	4
Defective rain gutters	10
Want of limewashing	18
Defective ventilating shafts	3
Improper waste pipe connections	2
Defective soil pipes	2
Insanitary yards	4
Nuisances from van dwellers	1
Building used for habitation in contravention of bye-laws	1
Defective roof	1

315

Besides the above 21 new water closets have been provided.

Nuisances *re* Workshops Inspections :—

Want of limewashing	...	...	...	14
Separate w.c. accommodation for sexes...	...	...	...	4
Defective flushing cisterns to w.c.'s	...	...	...	1
Choked w.c.'s	...	...	...	1
Defective w.c.'s	...	...	...	2
Defective drain traps	...	...	...	1
Overcrowding	...	...	...	2
Nuisance from water gas plant	...	...	...	1
No w.c. accommodation	...	...	...	2
Defective soil pipe	...	...	...	1
Accumulation of manure	...	...	...	2
Total				31

Miscellaneous Nuisances :—

Accumulation of Dung	...	...	...	12
Accumulation of offensive matter	...	...	...	2
Insanitary dung pounds	...	...	...	3
Defective stable floor	...	...	...	2
Insufficient drainage to pigstye	...	...	...	2
Nuisance from fried fish shop	...	...	...	1
Foul ditches	...	...	...	2
Poultry kept so as to be a nuisance	...	...	...	2
Defective stable drains	...	...	...	6
Lodging House, want of lime-washing	...	...	...	1
Total				33

Contraventions of Cowsheds & Dairies Orders and Regulations.

1 COWSHEDS :—	No.	Work done by Owners or Occupiers.
Want of limewashing	13	All limewashed
No drainage	3	Two drained
Insufficient drainage	2	One repaired
Insufficient supply of wholesome water	2	Nothing done
Total		20
2 PREMISES OF PURVEYORS OF MILK :—		
Want of cleanliness and lime-washing	2	Cleansed & limewashed
Defective drain and traps	3	All made sound
Total		5

During the past year two of the largest Farms in the District have been provided with a new and complete system of Drainage, and the Cowsheds generally may be said to be in a very fair condition.

The few matters outstanding at the end of the year are receiving attention.

A considerable amount of work has again been done on verbal notification only, and where possible this course has always been adopted.

In all, 279 notices have been given, and the number outstanding is 10.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

WILLIAM HY. ALLEN.

CAUSES OF, AND AGES AT, DEATH DURING YEAR 1906.

TROWBRIDGE URBAN DISTRICT.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	Deaths in whole District at subjoined ages.							1905
	All ages.	Under 1 Year.	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and upwards	All Ages
Measles ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Whooping Cough	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	1
Diphtheria and Membranous Croup ...	4	...	3	1	...	...	...	3
Croup	3	2	1	...	...	...	...	1
Epidemic Influenza	2	...	...	...	...	1	1	1
Diarrhœa	7	6	...	...	...	...	1	2
Enteritis	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	2
Puerperal Fever... ..	2	...	...	...	...	2	...	...
Erysipelas ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Other Septic Diseases	2	1	...	...	...	...	1	1
Phthisis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis) ...	7	...	...	...	3	3	1	7
Other Tubercular Diseases	5	1	1	1	2	...	...	5
Cancer, Malignant Disease	22	...	...	1	...	12	9	15
Bronchitis	12	2	...	...	1	1	8	11
Pneumonia	14	3	2	...	...	7	2	14
Other Diseases of Respiratory Organs ...	3	...	...	...	...	...	3	2
Alcoholism, Cirrhosis of Liver	2	...	...	...	...	2	...	2
Premature Birth	5	5	...	...	...	...	...	2
Diseases and Accidents of Parturition ...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Heart Diseases	28	1	1	...	...	11	15	21
Accidents	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	3
Suicides	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	1
All other causes	57	2	1	...	...	9	45	55
All causes	180	24	10	4	6	50	86	152